

Chapter 6: Standards for Site Design

This chapter presents design guidelines for site design in the Historic Business District and local landmarks.

Site development should result in an attractive street edge that promotes pedestrian activity. Buildings should be located and oriented in a manner that complements traditional development patterns exhibited in the Historic Business District and areas where local landmarks exist. Streetscape and landscape improvements should respond to the overall street character and not detract from the pedestrian environment. Site design should reflect historic and adaptive reuse patterns established by existing development.

Building Placement

Buildings should be sited to respect existing and traditional development patterns, such as the orientation of structures to the street, the alignment of building fronts and setbacks and the relationship to neighboring properties.

6.1 Maintain the alignment of buildings along the sidewalk edge in the Historic Business District.

- In general, buildings should be placed at the sidewalk edge using a 0'-0" front setback along the sidewalk, except when existing historic building footprints are set back from the sidewalk edge.
- Maintain the alignment of key horizontal elements along the block.
- A small percentage of a building front may be set back to provide a courtyard or plaza or to define a primary building entry. Generally, no more than 33% of a building front should be set back from the sidewalk edge.

6.2 A building's side setback should be in keeping with the defined alignments.

- Buildings should employ a side setback within the range of historic buildings on the same block and consistent with Land Use and Development Code requirements.
- Party walls are common in the Historic Business District and should be considered an important site feature to maintain.

6.3 Maintain historic front and side setbacks for local landmarks outside of the Historic Business District.

- Residentially designed structures should retain a setback that reflects the traditional front yard area.

Site Context

A key consideration is the "context" of the project. This includes properties that abut the subject site as well as others within the District that are in view of it. Contributing properties within this "sphere of influence" should be considered to be a part of the site context.

Lighting

Lighting on a site is important for aesthetics, safety and for customer awareness. Traditionally, lights were simple in character and were used to highlight buildings, signs, entrances, first floor details, walkways and buildings. Today they are also used to light parking lots. Most fixtures had incandescent lamps that cast a color similar to daylight, were relatively low in intensity and were shielded with simple shade devices. Although new lamp types may be considered, the overall effect of modest, focused light should be continued. The light fixtures (luminaires) and poles (standards) should be unifying design elements that promote visual interest and variety. Site lighting should reinforce the visual continuity of Downtown.

The Town of Pagosa Springs has adopted lighting regulations. All exterior lighting improvements should be consistent with the requirements of these regulations. Lighting for streetscapes and parking areas can be found in Chapter 10.

6.4 On-site lighting should limit light trespass and light pollution.

- Lighting should be low scale and used for accent and illumination.
- Lighting should accent architectural details, building entrances and signs.
- Lighting should illuminate sidewalks, pedestrian routes, parking and service areas, for safety.

Mechanical Equipment

Utilities that serve properties often include telephone and electrical lines, ventilation systems, gas meters, air conditioners and telecommunication. Adequate space for these utilities should be planned in a project from the outset and they should be designed such that their visual impacts are minimized regardless of whether they are on the building or located on-site.

6.5 Minimize the visual impact of mechanical equipment as seen from the street.

- Undergrounding of utilities is encouraged.
- Utility meters should be mounted on the rear of buildings.
- All mechanical equipment and utility units shall not be visible from public view.
- Parapets, enclosures and other materials may be appropriate for screening .

Service Areas

Service areas for uses such as trash, recycling and loading facilities should be visually unobtrusive and should be integrated with the design of the site and the building.

6.6 Loading, unloading and service access should occur in the alleys.

- Trash dumpsters shall be screened and located on the site as to not impede parking areas.
- Trash dumpsters should be shared between multiple tenants, when feasible.

6.7 Outdoor storage is prohibited.

6.8 Screening devices and materials must complement the architectural character and materials palette of the structure.

- Screened areas should blend with the abutting architecture.

Parking

New parking facilities should be designed to be attractive, compatible additions to Downtown. Using high quality materials, providing a sense of scale in architectural details and providing active uses at the sidewalk edge are methods that can mitigate the potentially negative impacts of new parking facilities. In general, a new parking facility should remain subordinate to the street scene.

6.9 Locate a surface lot such that it will be subordinate to other site features.

- On-site parking should be located behind buildings, where its visual impacts will be minimized.

6.10 It is not appropriate to demolish a structure on a building's lot or surrounding lots in order to create additional parking.

6.11 Locate a parking lot so it will minimize gaps in the continuous building wall of a block.

- Where a parking lot shares a site with a building, place the parking at the rear of the site.

6.12 Where a parking lot abuts a public sidewalk, provide a visual buffer.

- This may be a landscaped strip or planter.
- Consider the use of a wall as a screening element for the edge of the lot.
- Use a combination of trees and shrubs to create a landscape buffer.
- Where a parking lot exists that is presently not screened or landscaped, consider a landscaping program or an infill building that relates to the surrounding historic context.
- See the Land Use and Development Code for more guidance on appropriate parking lot landscaping and screening.



Dumpsters should be screened from view.



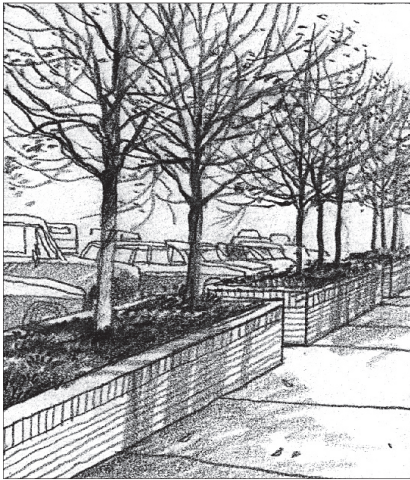
Do not locate window air conditioning units on a building's primary facade.



A visual screen should be provided when a parking lot abuts a public area. (Pagosa Springs, CO)



Screen parking areas. (Bellingham, WA)



Where a parking lot abuts a public sidewalk, provide a visual buffer. Consider the use of a wall as screen for the edge of the lot. Materials should be compatible with those of nearby buildings.

6.13 In order to reduce the land area for parking surface, use alternative methods of meeting parking demand.

- Share parking spaces with complementary uses that have different peak periods of parking demand.
- Facilitate access to the site by alternative modes of transportation, including walking, bicycling and transit.

6.14 Minimize the negative visual impacts of cars parked on site.

- Screen parking areas from view of public ways with landscaping (i.e., berm, low decorative wall, hedge) a minimum of 24" and a maximum of 36" in height.
- Divide parking areas into smaller lots with planted buffers between them to minimize the perceived scale of the total field of stalls.
- The use of curbs to separate paved areas and parking lots is prohibited unless combined with other screening and buffering elements such as landscaping and/or fencing.

Parking Structures

Parking structures should be designed to enhance activity at the street level. At a minimum, a parking structure should be compatible with the surrounding streetscape and land uses and should help animate adjacent streets. The visual impact of moving cars and parked cars should be mitigated by placing the drive lanes/ramps on the alley or internal to the structure and by ensuring that openings and fenestration block automobile lights.

6.15 Orient and design parking structures to create a visually attractive, pedestrian-friendly street edge.

- The structure should be "wrapped" with commercial or office uses at the street level to camouflage parking and to animate the street.

6.16 Parking structures shall be compatible with traditional buildings in the surrounding area.

- Respect window shapes and patterns traditionally seen on historic commercial structures.
- Maintain the alignment and rhythm of architectural elements, as viewed from the street edge.
- Use complementary building materials to ensure compatibility with historic structures.
- Ensure that curb cuts do not interfere with heavy volumes of pedestrian traffic.
- Integrate architectural detailing to express traditional commercial building widths.